purchase of weapons and communication devices under various centrally sponsored schemes to tackle poaching.

(b) and (c) "Forest Officers" including forest rangers and others have powers to combat poaching under The Indian Forest Act, 1927, The wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and various State Acts and Rules. It has also been decided to amend The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to make it more effective.

Environmental clearance for Orissa projects

2421. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some projects in Orissa are pending with his Ministry for environmental clearance;

(b) if so, what are those projects, particularly related to irrigation and industry;

(c) the reasons for the delay in giving clearance to those projects; and

(d) the steps taken to accord early clearance to those projects?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Six projects related to mining are pending for environmental clearance. However, no projects related to Irrigation and Industry are pending for environmental clearance.

(c) and (d) Decision on environmental clearance to project is usually taken within 90 days of receipt of complete information.

Commercial production of GM Mustard

†2422. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal to permit Genetically Modified (GM) Mustard, prepared by mixing five types of foreign genes, for commercial production, is under Government's consideration;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The transgenic hybrid mustard developed by M/s. Proagro Seed Company Ltd. for improving the yield contain three genes for three traits; these are (i) bar (glucosinolate ammonium tolerance trait), (ii) barnase (male sterility producing trait), and (iii) barstar (restoration of fertility trait). Based on the recommendation of the Monitoring-cum-Evaluation Committee (MEC) of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM), the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) in its 27th Meeting held on 8th August, 2001 permitted M/s. Proagro Seeds Company Ltd. to conduct large scale open field trials. Subsequently the Company submitted the proposal for approval of the GEAC for commercial release and marketing of transgenic mustard and seed production. The GEAC has not given the approval as yet.

GM Mustard

2423. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have given approval for genetically modified mustard being marketed in the country;

(b) if so, whether an evaluation has been made of the benefits of higher productivity *vis-a-vis* the risks to health and local varieties;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the insect-resistant Bt. Cotton crop has been found to be successful; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC)